

Transition to Secondary School following Covid-19 School Closures



Information for Parents and Carers

If your child is expressing any worries or concerns about Secondary School right now, you may find this booklet helpful. It contains some ideas about preparing for secondary school, and what to do if worries stick around for a long time.

Making the transition to Secondary School can feel daunting and exciting at the same time. You might remember your own first days at Secondary School. A new building, lots of different subjects and teachers, new students, new uniform, and different journey into school. Along with it, a growing sense of independence.

Children moving to Secondary School this year are ending their Primary School days in quite a different way. Although schools in Tower Hamlets are already thinking about the different ways they can still give children a good ending to Primary School, your child may have missed out on some of the experiences year 6 children enjoyed last year that helped them to get ready for the big move.

It is more important than ever that children have a chance to share their excitements about secondary school, as well as have time to address any worries they may hold.

Is worry or anxiety normal?

“Worry and anxiety are normal emotions that we all feel from time to time.”

Many children and young people worry about school from time-to-time. This is normal. Worry and anxiety are part of life and learning to deal with them is part of growing up.

Sometimes too much worry or anxiety can become a problem, especially if it stops people doing what they want or need to do.

What do children worry about when transitioning to Secondary School?

The 5 main worries children have about Secondary School are:

- Getting lost in their new school
- Being bullied
- Managing their homework
- Losing old friends
- Discipline and detentions

(STARS Transition Study, UCL)

Although parents and children are often worried about secondary school at the end of Year 6, by Year 7 most children's and parent's concerns reduce quickly.



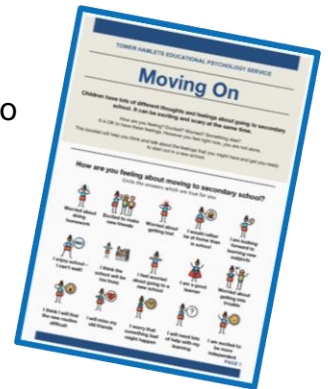
“Most children settle well socially and academically when they move to secondary school.”

How can I help my child if they are worried?

The current crisis has been an uncertain time for families, and it may have increased stress and strain at home. It may have felt harder to make time to listen to children's thoughts and feelings. It is important to take time to help your child deal with any worries about secondary school as soon as possible, to help stop them getting worse.

- **CHOOSE** – Try to choose a time to talk when both you and your child are calm.
- **CHECK-IN** – Take time to check in with yourself about any worries you might have about your child moving to Secondary School. It is important to try not to pass your worries onto your child. It is also helpful to try to separate your concerns from any worries your child may have.
- **LISTEN** - One of the main things you can do is listen to your child's worries and fears calmly. Acknowledge that those worries are very real to them. Try to do this at a time when you are feeling calm and in control. Reassure them that you and the school will work together to make things okay.

We have created a 'Moving On' booklet for children to share their feelings about Secondary School. You may like to complete this with your child to prepare and plan together for the move to come.



- **COMMUNICATE** - Let the school know about your child's concerns as soon as possible. Worries about secondary transition are very normal, but the sooner school knows about these worries, the sooner they work with you to help address them.
- **STAY CALM** - Stay positive and optimistic: the school will help with the transition process.

Remembering the good things

The school closures might have been difficult for you and your children. They have led to children missing some experiences and opportunities to play with their friends. However, most periods in our life are neither all positive or all negative. It can help to look out for the good things, no matter how big or small. It is likely have been some good things that your child has enjoyed about being home: like spending more time with family, getting up later, learning something new or playing with siblings.

It can help to reframe a child's worries and to help them remember what was good about being at home during the school closures.

You might ask them questions like:

- What has been the best thing about the lockdown?
- What did you have the opportunity to do, that you otherwise might not have had?
- What did you learn about yourself during the lockdown?
- What did other people learn about you during the lockdown?



Your child might like to make a 'memory jar' of all the nice things (no matter how big or small) that happened while the country was on lockdown.

Helpful Resources

These resources may help you to talk to your child about transition to secondary school, and address any worries they may have.

[YoungMinds](#) – Parents Helpline **0808 802 5544**

YoungMinds has a wide range of resources for parents around children and young people's wellbeing. Search 'transitions find your feet' for information on school transition.

[Childline](#) **0800 1111**

This is an organisation that helps children and young people with their worries. You can visit this website with your child. We particularly like the relaxation activities on the 'Calm Zone' webpage.

[Kooth.com](#)

Kooth is an organisation that provides emotional support for children and adolescents.

[BBC Bitesize](#)

This website has some information and activities about secondary transition and supporting children's wellbeing. Go to the BBC bitesize website and search 'starting secondary school'.

What if things don't improve?

It is normal for a child to be a little unsettled during transition. If they have just started at Secondary School, give them a few weeks to settle in.

If your child continues to feel worried about secondary school after they have had time to talk about transition with their teachers and peers, please speak to a member of staff at the school they are currently attending.

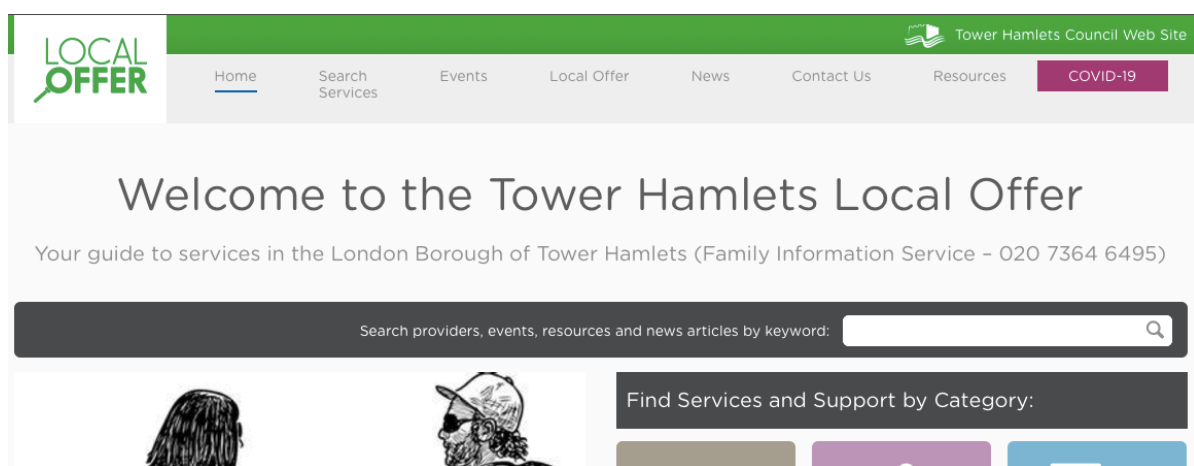
In Primary School, speak to the Year 6 teacher, as they may be able to provide further transition support. In Secondary School, the identified point of contact is usually your child's Form Tutor.

Working in partnership with the school can really help to make a difference, so you can plan together and find some helpful solutions. The school should respond to any school-based needs, such as academic support or support with friendships. They can request support from other professionals. Make sure you have somebody to talk to also. This could be a friend, family member or an organisation such as YoungMinds.

SENDIASS is the Tower Hamlets SEND Information, Advice and Support Service, providing impartial advice, advocacy and support to parents and carers whose children have special educational needs and / or disabilities. It can be contacted on 020 7364 6489 Monday-Friday 9.00-17.00.

You can also visit **Tower Hamlets Local Offer** for more information about other services that can support you and your child.

www.localoffertowerhamlets.co.uk



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Tower Hamlets Local Offer website. At the top, there is a green navigation bar with the 'LOCAL OFFER' logo on the left and 'Tower Hamlets Council Web Site' on the right. Below this is a white navigation menu with links for Home, Search Services, Events, Local Offer, News, Contact Us, Resources, and a COVID-19 button. The main heading reads 'Welcome to the Tower Hamlets Local Offer' with a sub-heading 'Your guide to services in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (Family Information Service - 020 7364 6495)'. A search bar is present with the text 'Search providers, events, resources and news articles by keyword:'. Below the search bar are two cartoon illustrations of a girl and a boy, and a section titled 'Find Services and Support by Category:' with three colored buttons (brown, purple, blue).

For general information about Secondary Transition and School Admissions, go to the Tower Hamlets website and search '[Secondary School Admissions](#)'